

San Luis Drainage Feature Re-Evaluation

U.S. Department of the Interior – Bureau of Reclamation

SAN LUIS DRAINAGE

FEATURE RE-EVALUATION

Meeting Summary

Pt. Estero Elected Officials / County Representatives

August 26, 2002 – San Luis Obispo, California

Alternatives Discussion

Meeting Participants

Supervisor Shirley Bianchi, County of San Luis
Obispo Supervisor

Greg Haas, Office of Congresswoman Lois Capps

Suzanne Lacaro, Office of Senator Jack O'Connell

Sandra Agalos, Office of Assemblyman Abel
Maldonado

Teresa Martinez, Office of Senator Bruce
McPherson

John Euphrat, SLO County Planning Department

Martha Neder, SLO County Planning Department

Jason Phillips, Reclamation

Marian Echeverria, Reclamation

Terry Cooke, URS

Charles Gardiner, PAM

Jennifer Allen, PAM

Reclamation is refining and narrowing alternatives for the San Luis Unit Drainage Feature Re-evaluation. Reclamation met with representatives from San Luis Obispo County, including state and local elected officials and staff from San Luis Obispo County Planning Office, to discuss the ocean outfall alternative. Participants received a project overview and a review of the alternatives. Participants discussed anticipated local concerns about an ocean outfall through San Luis Obispo County to an offshore location.

Meeting Purpose and Objectives

- Provide an overview of the Feature Re-evaluation process
- Discuss drainwater source control and re-use
- Present alternatives focusing on the ocean outfall option
- Obtain input from participants

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Project Overview

Jason Phillips reviewed the history of Reclamation's involvement with the San Luis Unit. He presented the key events since the San Luis Act (1960). Jason reviewed the court case under which Reclamation is doing this Feature Re-evaluation. He continued with a description of the drainage service area and the components of a complete drainage process.

- Reclamation should provide the potential cost of these projects and who will be responsible for payment.

Ocean Outfall Alternative

Jason Phillips reviewed the approach to formulating and optimizing alternatives for four disposal concepts. Participants provided the following comments and suggestions regarding an ocean outfall alternative.

- San Luis Obispo County is protective of the coastline and land areas within the county. The constituents of the drainwater are not consistent with the current ecology.
- Reclamation can expect significant opposition from people and interests in San Luis Obispo County. The County has worked hard to protect and preserve its environment. A new discharge would conflict with those efforts.
- The Monterey Bay Marine Sanctuary and the Morro Bay National Estuary are important resources to this area. Recent studies have shown that releases at Point Estero can flow back into Morro Bay due to a swirling tidal action. The Marine Sanctuary is updating the management plan and the boundaries may be expanded to include the Morro Bay area.
- Constructing a pipeline that runs across the San Andreas Fault will present numerous challenges.
- Reclamation needs to determine the benefits for San Luis Obispo County. A potential benefit to the county could include a treatment plant to treat drainwater to provide drinking water. The county also faces challenges with saltwater intrusion in the groundwater supplies.
- An ocean outfall alternative includes many environmental challenges and San Luis Obispo County has many active groups that are currently working on intense watershed restoration projects.
- Farmers in San Luis Obispo County produce many similar crops to those coming from the San Luis Unit. The farmers have also been hit with heavy regulations for discharges of sediment and nutrients to local creek systems. Receiving drainwater from competitors may be unacceptable.
- San Luis Obispo County economy depends upon a very active tourism industry. A project such as this may have negative impacts to that industry.
- Reclamation should review any existing pipelines that could be used to minimize disturbances to terrestrial habitats, including an out-of-service Chevron pipeline.

Land Retirement

Participants provided the following comments and suggestions regarding land retirement.

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- Reclamation should further explain the differences between the No-Action alternative and Land Retirement.

Other Comments and Suggestions

Participants provided the following additional comments about the project process.

- Other agencies/organizations to include in discussions:
 - National Marine Fisheries Service
 - Fish and Wildlife Service
 - Monterey Bay Marine Sanctuary
 - Morro Bay National Estuary Program
 - State Lands Commission
 - Coastal Commission
 - City of Morro Bay
 - County Farm Bureau
 - Federal elected officials
 - ECOSLO
 - Commercial fisheries representatives (Morro Bay – Rick Algert / Port of San Luis – Jay Elder)
 - University of California at Santa Barbara
 - CalPoly University – SLO
 - Regional Water Quality Control Board
 - Those involved with the Estuary restoration program

Schedule

Jason Phillips reviewed the anticipated milestones for 2002 and beyond.

- Preliminary Evaluation of Alternatives (internal evaluation results) – September 2002
- Preliminary Preferred Drainage Service Plan – December 2002
- Initiate EIS – January 2003
- Interim Actions